COLORADO RECEIVES FEDERAL DOLLARS TO IMPROVE CARE TO THE ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2011

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DENVER – April 27, 2011 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing announced today that Colorado was selected as one of 15 states to pioneer strategies to improve efficiency and lower costs for people receiving both Medicare and Medicaid. Colorado will receive \$995,914 over 18 months to develop a plan to assist approximately 80,000 Coloradans who are covered by Medicare and Medicaid. The funding is from the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

"Clients who are receiving Medicare and Medicaid coverage, or dual eligibles, have complex and costly medical needs. These are our lowest-income, chronically ill citizens who will greatly benefit from better care coordination," says Judy Zerzan, MD, MPH, chief medical officer. "We will work with clients, their families and other stakeholders to develop our demonstration proposal that will focus on coordinating acute and chronic care, behavioral health and long-term supports and services."

The goal of the funding is to reduce duplication of services, lower costs and improve access to care, according to CMS. The Affordable Care Act created new federal agencies to streamline care within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, including the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office, or the Duals Office, and Center of Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

"Beneficiaries who are in both Medicare and Medicaid can face different benefit plans, different rules for how to get those benefits and potential conflicts in care plans among providers who do not coordinate with each other," said CMS administrator Donald M. Berwick. "This can be disastrous for those beneficiaries who are most vulnerable and in need of help."

After federal review of the proposals, CMS will work with states to implement the plans that hold the most promise. The other states selected: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other programs for Colorado's low-income, elderly and people with disabilities. The mission of the department is to improve access to cost-effective, quality health care services for Coloradans. For more information about the department, please visit Colorado.gov/hcpf.